



# CONGRESSWOMAN JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN

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PUERTO RICO - AT LARGE

**Statement in Support of  
H.R. 6636, the *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Sexual Harassment  
and Assault Prevention Improvements Act of 2020*  
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources  
Full Committee Markup  
Rep. Jenniffer González-Colón  
Wednesday, July 29, 2020**

I want to express my support for H.R. 6636, the *NOAA Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Improvements Act of 2020*, which I introduced along with my colleagues Congresswoman Bonamici, Congressman Young, and Congressman Huffman.

Sexual assault and harassment must never be tolerated, and that includes within our federal workforce. Following allegations of sexual misconduct at NOAA, Congress included language in the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act requiring the agency to develop a comprehensive policy to prevent and respond to sexual assault and harassment. While NOAA has made significant strides to carry out and implement this initiative, it is clear that more needs to be done.

That's why this bipartisan legislation is so crucial. H.R. 6636 provides NOAA with additional tools to strengthen its sexual assault and harassment policies and secures more resources to support survivors.

Among its various provisions, the bill includes improvements to reporting mechanisms, and expands coverage of NOAA's sexual harassment prevention and response policy to include personnel such as fisheries observers and voting members and executive and administrative staff of regional fishery management councils. It would also strengthen resources for survivors by requiring that the agency's victim advocates be full-time employees.

It is my hope that, with these and other reforms included in the bill, NOAA will be able to have the necessary resources in place to fully assist and empower survivors in the agency.

I once again thank the Committee for bringing forward this important legislation.